UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Adjustment Agency
Washington 25, D. C.

August 10, 1945

HARVESTING AND CURING PEANUTS

Suggested spot announcements to be copied on separate sheets and delivered to radio stations for broadcast.

ANNOUNCER: Farmers can have more dollars of profit -- They can save pounds of good food and feed by harvesting their peanut crop with care. Harvest at exactly the right time -- Use the proper diggers -- and stack the peanuts according to the best recommended methods. Be sure to stack them so that air can move in the loosely filled space between the peanuts and the supporting pole. The gradual movement of air through the stack is essential to successful curing. The bases of the plants toward the center of the stack should be higher than the tops toward the outer edges, and the stack should be topped with grass, hay, or stack cover to prevent rain from seeping into it. Check with your county agent for full details of the best way to harvest and cure your crop. You'll have more peanuts, of better quality, bringing higher returns.

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ANNOUNCER: Peanut Growers:- Don't waste any of the labor you've spent in planting and cultivating your crop. Follow through with good farming methods in harvesting and curing your peanuts. It means more food for the Nation--more money in your pocket. Ask your county agent to give you the benefit of tried and tested experiments on the best time to harvest, the best way to dig the peanuts, and the proper methods of stacking. And don't over-look the value of protecting your land with cover crops. When your peanut crop is harvested, the land is completely bare and open to the erosion attacks of wind and water. Plant winter cover crops immediately--even before you take away your peanut stacks. Save your land to fight still harder next year in the battle of food production.

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ANNOUNCER: Mr. Farmer, are you ready to harvest your peanuts? Then check up on the best possible way to get the job done -- The best way to harvest more peanuts to the acre. It means more money for you, more food to win the war and the peace. Your county agent

will be glad to give you any advice you'd like about the right time and methods of harvesting and curing peanuts on your farm. The best way pays off. And remember that when the peanut crop is harvested, your land is completely unprotected from the dangers of wind and water erosion. So plant winter cover crops adapted to your locality at once — even before you take away the peanut stacks. Sow close-growing cover crops between the stacks to hold your valuable top-soil in place. See your AAA committeeman regarding assistance offered in growing satisfactory cover crops.

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ANNOUNCER: High quality peanuts — Rich nutritious peanut hay — More peanuts from every acre — All that adds up in dollars and cents for the farmer. And you can raise that total figure with proper harvesting and curing methods. Choose the right time for harvesting — use the right implements for digging, and stack the peanuts for good curing and protection. Your county agent will be glad to give you full details on tested methods. Ask him about it today. And remember to top off good peanut cultivation with cover crops planted as soon as your crop is stacked. AAA offers financial assistance for establishing winter cover crops. See your local AAA committeeman for further details.

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This material was prepared jointly by Agricultural Adjustment Agency; Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering; and the Extension Service.

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EXTRA CARE URGED IN HARVESTING, CURING PEANUTS

(This is the eighth in a series of "Grow More Peanuts per Acre" suggested press releases for joint use by State and county AAA and Extension Service.)

More peanuts per acre mean extra dollars in profit to farmers who take extra care in harvesting and curing their 1945 peanut crops, according to (name), (county agent or AAA committeeman).

Peanuts are a vital war crop, (name) pointed out, and the nation needs all the extra high quality peanuts that can be produced. Since farmers have planted every suitable acre in peanuts that is practical to do, the only way left to boost production is by producing more per acre. This, to a great extent, can be done by following the simple approved harvesting and curing methods.

"High quality peanuts --those that are bright in color, low in moisture, free of dirt--bring a premium on the market which often amounts to several dollars per ton," (name) explained. "The grower just can't afford to let these extra dollars slip away when by following these simple steps he can save them:

"1. Harvest peanuts at exactly the right time for maximum results.

2. Loosen peanuts from the soil with implements that will cut off and leave in the soil the greater portion of the root system which contains the nitrogen-bearing nodules.

3. Stack peanuts properly to insure good quality and to reduce losses.

4. Plant winter cover crops immediately on soil from which peanuts have been dug to prevent erosion and leaching."

A too early harvest results in many immature, poorly developed pods that contain partially developed kernels, (name) said. On the other hand, delayed harvest causes peanuts to decay or to break off from the plants and be lost in the soil. As harvest time approaches, the grower should examine the pods frequently to determine if his crop is ready for harvest. The kernels should be full grown and the skins have a distinct texture, taking on the natural color of the variety. In addition, the interior of the shells should have begun to color

and show darkened veins. In any case, all peanuts should be harvested before frost.

Plow-type diggers or ordinary turning plows with special points which properly cut and loosen peanuts from the soil are now on the market. Regular machine potato diggers with elevators have proved satisfactory on reasonably dry soil, and if the crop is free from grass. Other similar elevator types of digger are also in extensive use, (name) said.

Peanuts should not be stacked until the foliage is well wilted but not brittle. This drying usually requires about 24 hours. They should be stacked around poles 8 to 9 feet long, pointed at the top, set 18 to 20 inches in the ground and thoroughly tamped, (name) explained.

The peanuts should be placed on cross pieces nailed to the poles about 15 inches above the ground, with the pods next to the pole, leaving a "flue" through which air can pass. The stack should not be over $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter. The base of the plants toward the pole should be kept higher than the outside leaves so that rain will run off instead of into the stack. Grass, hay, or stack covers should be placed on top to keep rain from entering and to protect the peanuts from weather and birds.

Stacks should be built to the height of a man or a little higher so as to leave a smaller proportion of the crop exposed to weathering during curing. They should be inspected frequently throughout the curing period and any damage to stacks quickly repaired to prevent spoilage, (name) said.

Some close growing crops like small grain or winter legumes such as vetches, Austrian winter peas, or blue lupines, where adapted, provide good cover crops. These cover crops can be sown between the stacks promptly after harvest, and they can be turned under as green manure in the spring to add organic matter and fertility to the soil. These cover crops are particularly important now that some farmers haven't been able to keep up a regular system of crop rotation during the years of all-out war production.

AAA offers assistance for establishing a satisfactory cover of winter legumes. See your local AAA committeeman for further details.

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CARE IN HARVESTING AND CURING PEANUTS URGED TO INCREASE YIELD FROM EACH ACRE

(This is the third of a series of suggested feature or farm page articles on increasing the per-acre yield of peanuts. It may be used, with necessary local adaptations, by AAA or Extension Service, State or county personnel, in efforts to meet 1945 peanut goals and requirements.)

Regardless of whether they are to feed a nation at war or at peace, peanuts during the next year will be just as important as they have ever been since Pearl Harbor. It was then that Uncle Sam called upon the Southern farmer to plant every suitable acre in peanuts. And the farmer has done just that. This fall he will harvest more than three million acres. Peanuts are needed for food for they are packed with vitamins, proteins, and oils. Therefore, they are one of our most nutritious foods.

Because farmers have expanded their acreage to the practical limit, and yet more peanuts are needed, they have set out to grow more peanuts per acre. Greater quantities of treated and tested seed were planted last spring than ever before. Generally, farmers closely followed approved planting and cultivation methods. But now comes the final lap--the harvest. All previous efforts will be in vain unless farmers properly dig and cure their peanuts.

High quality peanuts--those that are bright in color, low in moisture, and free from disease and dirt--should be every farmer's goal. Not only are these peanuts needed by our soldiers, war workers, and Americans in other walks of life, but they are worth more to the farmer. There are extra dollars profit in quality peanuts.

How and when peanuts are dug and the manner in which they are stacked and cured determine their quality to a large extent. Many farmers each year fail to make the maximum profits from their crops because they do not practice a few simple precautions about caring for peanuts during the harvesting and curing period.

Of primary importance is the exact time when peanuts should be harvested. As harvest time approaches, the grower should inspect the plants frequently, particularly the inside of the pods. The tops are kept green and growing later by dusting and spraying which many farmers are now doing, so their appearance is not a dependable guide. The best test is in the kernels. If they are full grown with the skins displaying a distinct texture and the natural color of the variety, and if the

inside of the shell has begun to color and show darkened veins, then the grower may be sure the time for harvest is at hand.

The next important step is digging the peanuts. The grower should use an implement that will cut off and leave in the soil the greater portion of the root system on which the nitrogen-bearing nodules grow. These, of course, restore some of the nitrogen to the soil as the nodules take this vital nutrient from the air.

Among the implements that do the job properly are special-type plows, or attachable points to an ordinary turning plow, from which the mold-board has been removed. And there are various elevator-type diggers which are used on reasonably dry soil on which the crop is comparatively free from grass. These machines lift the peanuts from the soil and shake off the loose soil.

After the peanuts are dug and the loose soil shaken off, they should be allowed to dry until the leaves are wilted but not brittle; then, they should be stacked. This drying process may require 24 hours or more. The grower should be careful not to stack too soon after digging as this may cause serious losses in quality of both peanuts and hay.

Poles, pointed on top, should be set 18 to 20 inches in the ground and thoroughly tamped. Peanuts should be stacked on cross pieces nailed to the poles about 15 inches off the ground with the pods placed next to the pole and the leaves slanting to the outside. This protects the pods, keeps them bright and clean, and allows rain to drain harmlessly off the stack. The cross pieces keep the peanuts off the ground and allow air to pass up through the loosely filled space in the stack around the peanuts and the pole. This gradual movement of air is necessary to good curing.

A good stack should be about the height of a man or higher and not more than 3½ feet in diameter. Grass, hay, or a stack cover placed on top are ideal for keeping the rain from entering and for protection against wildlife.

The grower should realize that every stack contains several dollars worth of peanuts and peanut hay. So, it will pay him to keep a constant watch over them to prevent them from being upset or damaged by wind or any other way.

Despite the labor shortage, the grower should not depend on pitchforks in building his peanut stacks. While the peanuts can be collected and brought to the poles with pitchforks, the grower should place the plants around the pole by hand for a first class stacking job. He must be sure that the pods are placed toward the center because peanuts that

are exposed to the outside are subject to weathering, which will lower the quality, and to damage or destruction by birds and animals.

Since the digging of peanuts makes the soil more susceptible to leaching and to erosion by wind and water, the grower should plant winter cover crops.

Much of the peanut land is overworked because of the pressing needs for peanuts. Peanuts have followed peanuts on some fields for as much as three years in a row, thus endangering soil productivity much more than would growing crops in a systematic plan of rotation. For this reason cover crops, while a "must" in any peanut crop year, are doubly important now .

Some close growing crops like small grain or winter legumes, such as vetches, Austrian winter peas, or blue lupines, where adapted, provide good cover crops. These cover crops can be sown between the stacks promptly after harvest, and can be turned under as green manure in the spring to add organic matter and fertility to the soil.

AAA offers assistance for establishing a satisfactory cover of winter legumes. See your local AAA committeeman for further details.

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SOME HINTS ON HARVESTING AND CURING PEANUTS

Suggested script for broadcast by AAA committeeman or Extension representative with Radio Farm Director or announcer. To be adapted to suit locality in which broadcast.

RFD: Harvest-time for peanuts is just around the corner. So today, we've asked (name)____, (title)___, to come in and give us a few pointers on harvesting peanuts.

I take it, _____, that like everything else, there's a right way and a wrong way to harvest peanuts.

____: Yes sir, and every year some farmers lose money and valuable food for the Nation by not harvesting and curing their peanuts properly.

RFD: I can see where loss of yield and quality would certainly cut into a farmer's profit all right.

____: High quality peanuts -- of bright color, low in moisture content, and free from dirt -- pay off dividends to the farmer that can amount to several dollars a ton, and per acre.

RFD: Then, too, you mentioned the loss of food, Mr. _____. And this year we need every pound of good food and feed that we can produce.. So we can't afford to waste good peanuts by improper harvesting and curing.

____: You're right about that, _____.

RFD: Well, what would you say would be the first thing a farmer should watch in harvesting his crop?

____: I guess you'd say first would be the time of harvest. When you harvest your peanuts too soon, the partly developed kernels shrivel when they dry or even mold before they dry, and you have a lot of worthless peanuts on your hands. And then, if you wait too long, you lose because the peanuts decay or break off from the plants.

RFD: I've always heard that you can tell when it's time to harvest by the tops of the plants look -- by the condition of the leaves.

____: I wouldn't count on that method as being very dependable. Particularly now when many peanut growers are dusting and spraying their plants. That prevents the early discoloration and dropping of the leaves; so you may be fooled about the condition of the kernels under the ground.

RFD: What's the best sure-fire way of telling when it's time?

____: By simply pulling up a few of your plants at different points in the field and looking at the inside of the pods. If the kernels are full grown and the skins are taking on the natural color of the variety of peanuts you're growing, then it's just about time to harvest. Look at the inside of the shell. If it is beginning to color and show dark veins, they're ready. But be sure you harvest the crop before the plants are damaged by frost.

RFD: After you've picked the best time for harvesting, how do you go about hitting the "right way" from there on? For instance, what are the best implements to use?

____: Your peanuts should be loosened from the soil with an implement that will cut off the roots just deep enough to get the pods, leaving most of the nitrogen-bearing nodules on the roots in the soil. Diggers such as this are available and it really pays to use them. You can also get special points to attach to an ordinary turn plow after you take off the moldboard. Then regular diggers are good enough if your soil is reasonably dry and your crop is free from grass. These diggers not only lift the peanuts out of the ground, but they also shake off the soil. But no matter what kind of machine you use, it should be one that leaves the nodules in the ground and does not tangle the plants.

RFD: What happens when the plants are tangled?

____: That just makes it harder and more costly to stack your peanuts properly.

RFD: And I guess that brings us around to the stacking process itself. How long should you wait to stack your peanuts?

____: Well, after the peanuts are dug, you shake them loose from the soil and let them dry until the leaves are well wilted, but not yet brittle. This may require 24 hours or more. You can get into quite a bit of trouble by stacking too soon.

RFD: What kind of trouble?

____: You can lose a great deal of the quality of the peanuts and hay if you don't wait long enough. That's one of the major causes of "hidden damage" while the peanuts are being cured.

RFD: What's the best way to cure peanuts, _____?

____: To the best of my knowledge, there's only one practical way to cure peanuts if you want the pods to stay bright and clean, and the hay to keep the dark green color — and after all, that's what every peanut grower wants!.... That one good way is to stack the peanuts around poles. These poles should be about eight or nine feet long - smooth and sharpened to a point at the top end. Then you nail cross pieces, twenty to twenty-four inches long, about fifteen inches from the ground. These cross pieces are to keep the peanuts off the ground and to let the air get to the loosely filled space between the peanuts and the pole. The gradual movement of air through the stack is essential to good peanut curing.

RFD: You say these poles should be about eight or nine feet long. That's kind of long isn't it?

____: Well, they should be set about eighteen to twenty inches into the ground. But it's a good idea to build your stacks to at least the height of a man. That leaves less of your crop exposed to the weather. Then, too, you should cover the top of the stack with grass, hay, or stack covers to keep the rain out.

RFD: And if you shape your stack so that it's higher in the middle, that helps to keep the rain out, doesn't it?

____: That's right. Put your pods next to the pole, with the tops to the outside, and with the base of the plants toward the center, higher than the tops toward the outside edges. That makes the rain run off instead of seeping into the center of your stack.

RFD: That sounds as if it would require hand labor to stack that carefully.

____: It does. I know that farmers have to avoid as much hand work as possible these days, because there aren't enough hands to go around. But a good job of stacking peanuts is going to require a certain amount of hand labor. You can't do it all with pitchforks. But when you realize that every stack contains several dollars worth of peanuts, as well as a lot of valuable hay, you know it's worth a little extra effort to keep from losing any part of a single stack from improper curing.

RFL: Now, let's see -- We've got our peanuts harvested and stacked for curing. Doesn't that just about take care of everything?

____: Almost. But there's another step that you might not consider actually a part of peanut production. However, it's just as much a part of the job as planting your crop in the first place.

RFD: And what's that?

____: Well, you know when your peanut crop is harvested, the land is completely bare and exposed. It's ripe for all the ugly damage that wind and water erosion and leaching can do. You stand a chance of losing a good portion of the productivity of that land soon if you don't take steps to prevent it.

RFD: With cover crops?

____: Exactly! You should plant winter cover crops immediately -- even before you remove the peanut stacks.

RFD: And what kind of winter cover crops provide the best protection?

____: Oh, some close growing crops like small grain or winter legumes such as vetches, Austrian winter peas, or blue lupines, where adapted. These cover crops can be sown between the stacks, and you can turn them under as green manure in the spring to add organic matter and fertility to the soil. These cover crops are particularly important now that farmers haven't been able to keep up a regular system of crop rotation during the years of all-out war production.

No doubt, you know that AAA offers assistance for establishing a satisfactory cover of winter legumes. See your local AAA committeeman for further details.

RFD: Well, that really does round out the operation, doesn't it,_____?

____: That does it, _____. But I would like to urge every peanut grower to harvest carefully. Every ton of peanuts helps to build up the food stocks it takes to win a war and the peace -- Every ton of peanuts means dollars and cents to the farmer. And improper harvesting methods could counteract much of the care he has put into the selecting, dusting, and planting of his peanuts.

RFD: Right. And thanks, _____, for coming in to point out some of the problems for us.

Farmer friends, you have just heard (name), (title), telling how to get more peanuts per acre with good harvesting methods.

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